



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 2:13-25 Study Hints for Discussion

[Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further](#) below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The [Class Preparation Guide](#) includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class; then, they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible lesson. And/Or, consider giving each student the [Verse-by-Verse Scripture Handout](#), which includes the Bible verses to be studied before class and other questions.

1. When Jesus began His ministry in Jerusalem, He found people selling animals for sacrifices in the temple, which He had seen every time He visited Jerusalem from the time He was a child growing up into manhood. How might He have felt during all those years prior to cleansing the temple?

We know that when Jesus was twelve, He told His parents that He knew the temple was His Father’s house: “He said to them, ‘Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?’” (Luke 2:49). He may have felt angry every year when He saw His Father’s house being so dishonored, but His time to begin His ministry had not yet come. He knew He had to wait for His Father’s perfect timing before He could clean His Father’s house from the moral and spiritual corruption that He saw there. From John’s Gospel, we see that cleansing His Father’s house was one of His top priorities.

2. Why do you think Jesus began His ministry in Jerusalem by first cleansing the temple?

Jesus may have established a Biblical principle when He cleansed the temple, which was the focal point for the worship of God. Possibly, Peter applied this principle to the church at a later point in time when he wrote, “For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17). Until God brings judgment (perhaps through a

divinely inspired prophet or other divine means) people have little hope when the highest and most respected religious leaders and teachers are morally and spiritually corrupt and misleading and teaching false doctrines and false interpretations of the Bible.

3. How might the selling of animals for sacrifices have begun with good intentions and then eventually become corrupted?

Some sincere people or religious leaders might have thought (or might have been led by God to think) that they could truly serve devout pilgrims coming to worship God in Jerusalem by providing sacrificial animals and currency exchange for them near or inside the city of Jerusalem. Over time, perhaps as the original intention was forgotten or ignored, this service to pilgrims might have been moved into the temple for the convenience of all. Eventually, making money for the religious leaders or “temple treasury” became the prime motive instead of worshiping God. The temple became as noisy as any commodities exchange or livestock auction or pen, which would make the devout, reverent, and quiet worship of God impossible.

4. Today, in what ways might a church become a marketplace and have an adverse effect upon the worship and service of God?

A church might begin with a library, and then begin selling books to make money for buying more books for the library, to help church members grow spiritually and have outreach books and resources to help others come to know Christ and the Bible better. Eventually, this and other means of selling other items might be seen as a means for funding world missions, then supporting other church programs, until fund raising and selling becomes a prime focus for some instead of worshiping God and learning more about the ways of Christ for the individual believer and the church.

5. Why do you think Jesus purposely gave the temple authorities an obscure answer about the temple and His body?

He knew by their question that they were not motivated by what was right or by the will of God. If He had spoken clearly to them, they would have stoned Him immediately for blasphemy or challenging their power as temple authorities. If He had not answered wisely, they might not have taken the time to have a mock trial and crucify Him as the Old Testament foretold. He would never have been able to teach the truth about God His Father and himself as the Son of God, if He had been killed too soon. He

spoke obviously in a way that His disciples would later remember that would strengthen their faith in Jesus as Prophet, Savior, and Risen Lord.

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